

United States Government

Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: 2/23/99

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: ECN-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Wildlife Mitigation Program EIS, Project No. 95-057-00

TO: Allyn Meuleman – EWN/Boise
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager

Proposed Action: Boyle Acquisition

Budget No: F3928

Wildlife Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement Analysis (See App. A of the Wildlife Mitigation Program EIS): 1.1 Fee-Title Acquisition and Transfer, 2.1 Transplanting Vegetation, 3.3 Artificial Nest Structures, 4.1 Wells, 4.6 Water Rights Acquisition, 5.1 Pipelines, 6.1 Prompt Fire Suppression and Fuels Management, 7.1 Herbicides, 8.1 Introduction, Reintroduction, or Augmentation of Wildlife Populations, 8.2 Control of Predators and Nuisance Animals, 9.1 Integration of Wildlife Habitat and Crop Production, 9.4 Grazing, 9.5 Forest Management, 10.1 Land Use Restrictions, and 10.4 Road Decommissioning.

Location: Jefferson County, Idaho.

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), and Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Description of the Proposed Action:

BPA and BLM are proposing to purchase a 2,600-acre parcel of land as a 'common share' project. The property is entirely in Jefferson County, along the west side of Menan Buttes. A county road, Twin Buttes Rd., runs through the east side of the property. The Butte-Market Lake Canal runs through the south half of the property. This parcel provides extremely high value cottonwood forest and willow habitat along the river. It includes a large slough, Butte Slough, and an upland area of sagebrush-steppe. The current owners use the property as a combination farm and ranch operation.

Once acquired, BLM (or IDFG) would manage the property to protect and maintain the high value cottonwood forest, protect the bald eagle nesting areas, and manage the various other wetlands, upland, and possibly agricultural areas for wildlife habitat. Protection of this property is consistent with the 1991 BLM/FS Snake River Activity/Operations Plan. In the Jefferson County Land Use Plan, most of this property is designated as 'Open Space Greenbelt' and includes long-term objectives of protecting the forested areas along the river and public trail systems. With BLM retaining the title to the property, protection of tribal treaty rights would be ensured.

There are numerous improvements on the property. There is a home, barns, and corrals located ½ mile west of the county road. There are also several sprinkler irrigation systems on the agricultural land, primarily the eastern portion of the property. In the northeast corner, four homesites have been already sold off, making this corner of the property (approx. 180 acres) less desirable for wildlife habitat. If the agricultural lands are included in the acquisition, they could be sharecropped or revegetated to permanent cover. The location of the home and barns presents somewhat of a problem in that they are not on the edge of the property where they could logically be sold separately. There are also numerous fences separating pastures on the property.

The property is adjacent to existing BLM land on nearly all sides, including the parcel recently acquired with BPA wildlife mitigation funds. There are scattered small private parcels along the east side. Although few surveys have been done, the BLM land in the Deer Parks area is rich in cultural resources, including numerous lithic scatters, tools, and bison bones.

This one key acquisition could provide BPA with mitigation credit for over 35% of the breeding bald eagle losses due to Palisades construction. Although much of the wetland and riparian habitat are already in good condition, enhancement of the pasture and cropland areas could provide additional mitigation credit. There are few immediate habitat enhancement needs other than to maintain perimeter fences and control noxious weeds. Long-term decisions would need to be made regarding the cropland areas if they are included in the acquisition.

Analysis: The compliance checklist for this project was completed by the BLM and meets the standards and guidelines for the Wildlife Mitigation Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

Section 7 consultation was conducted on 2/99 with Mike Donahoo with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under the requirements of the Endangered Species Act. Mike Donahoo of the USFWS concurred that the proposed land acquisition would have no affect on the bald eagle, peregrine falcon and Ute's ladies tresses.

An Archaeological and Historical Survey of the property was conducted in 1998 by the BLM. Five historic properties were identified and recorded within the boundaries of the acquisition lands. All five sites are potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. However, no direct impacts are anticipated by the change from private to public ownership. Livestock grazing would continue at present stocking rates for two years. However, restoration of riparian and other native vegetation would be the short and long term management goals. To achieve these goals grazing may be reduced, or curtailed. Restored vegetation would reduce erosion and reduce loss of cultural materials and features. All applicable Federal laws, orders and regulations would protect documented and undocumented cultural properties.

On November 4, 1998, BLM conducted a Level I Contaminant Survey of the proposed property acquisition. BLM discovered several locations that warranted additional investigation and/or clean up on the proposed property. On December 28, 1998, TDA Environmental Inc. completed an asbestos report where four samples were collected from the old, white house west of the present ranch house. None of these samples detected asbestos-containing materials in the house insulation. On Friday, January 15, 1999 BLM inspected the property again and found all remaining locations removed or cleaned-up. After the final inspection of the property, BLM

concluded that the property shows no signs of hazardous contamination or any potential for hazardous contamination.

Findings: The project is generally consistent with Section 11.2d.1 of the Northwest Power Planning Council's Fish and Wildlife Program. The attached Supplement Analysis finds 1) that the proposed actions are substantially consistent with the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265) and ROD, and; 2) that there are no new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed actions or their impacts. Therefore, no further NEPA documentation is required.

Eric N. Powers
ECN Project Lead
Environment, Fish and Wildlife Group

Concur:

Thomas C. McKinney
NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: _____

Attachments:

NEPA Compliance Checklist
USFWS Concurrence Letter
Cultural Resources Survey Documentation
Level I Hazardous Materials Survey Report

cc:

L. Croff - ECP-4

B. Beraud - ECN-4

N. Weintraub - ECN-4

H. Nigam – EH-42

P. Havens – EWN-4

Allyn Meuleman – EWN/Boise

P. Key - LN-7

Official File - ECN (EQ-15)

Epowers:enp:5823:2/23/99 (W:\ECN\ECN99\EQ-15\Boyle Acquisition SA.DOC)